4: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FL11 Luo FL11

CHAPTER III.

Nilotic Tribes of Kavirondo.

101 The generic name used of these peoples by themselves is Ja-Luo. The Bantu Kavirondo people call them Awa-Nyoro. A very common term for them is Wa-Nife.

231 241 361 *Modes of subsistence.*—They all live by agriculture. They reside in fixed villages of from ten to fifty huts. Nearly all the villages are surrounded by euphorbia hedges; formerly many villages had mud and occasionally stone walls, but this custom has died out. They breed cattle, sheep, goats, and fowls.

[224] 226 *Hunting and fishing.*—They dig pitfalls for elephants and also spear elephants. They catch large quantities of fish in the Lake Victoria Nyanza by means of large conical wicker traps "*dema.*" The process is as follows:—They have two enormously long ropes; one end of each rope is secured on shore, and the ropes are then paid out into the lake, one rope floats on the surface and from it hangs a fringe of papyrus stalks; the other rope is a ground rope, and is weighted with stones, and the two ropes are connected at intervals. By means of canoes these ropes are gradually brought round in a semi-circle the size of which gradually decreases. The fish rush shorewards to escape from the drawing in of the net, and rush into the mouth of the big wicker traps which are placed in a row in the shallow water near the shore. At the same time the women walk up and down dragging smaller meshed traps in which they collect myriads of tiny fish the size of a sardine. They fish a great deal at night by torchlight. They state that they get the best hauls of fish after rain; in the dry season they catch [824] comparatively few. Rafts of ambatch wood are used for laying out the net (ambatch is a very light spongy wood growing on the lake shore; it has a prickly [439] bark). They split and dry large quantities of fish and carry it inland from the lake for considerable distances to sell for grain.

227 501 Lines and hooks are also used to a certain extent by the Nyakach people and others. The people bordering the lake possess a few dug-out canoes and also a few of the sewn canoes bought from Baganda or Basoga.

491 *Bridges.*—They build rough bridges of timber across the rivers when in flood, but not suspension bridges like the North Kavirondo.

264 252 *Cooking, etc.*—They cook in earthen pots inside their huts, and also in the verandah of the huts. All cooking is done by women. The food is served up in little baskets. The father eats with his sons; they generally eat in a little separate hut with open sides built for the purpose. Women eat separately and inside the house.

372 *Fire.*—They know the use of firesticks but rarely need them, as they can always obtain a glowing ember from one or other of their neighbours.

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Games.—They play a kind of *bau* with sixteen holes; they put three small stones in each hole. The boys play a kind of hockey with a wooden ball.

Upon return from war about two out of every three cattle go to the chief; the chief then divides his share of the cattle with his brothers, and a man who has distinguished himself in war is given a reward of cattle by the chief. A man who distinguishes himself in war is also often given a wife without payment.

Food, etc.—They eat practically all meat except that of the hyæna. Some young men eat leopard meat to make them fierce in fighting; the meat of a serval cat is not eaten. The women do not eat fowls; some women do not eat sheep and eggs; some eat hippopotamus meat, some not; women do not drink milk, but eat it cooked with food. They have a curious custom of mixing cow's urine with the milk of the cow; the urine is allowed to stand a day or two to increase its flavour; they say it increases the amount of the butter and gives it a nice flavour, and it is moreover supposed to have a medicinal effect. The crested crane (*Balaerica gibbericeps*) is never killed or eaten by these people.

Medicine, etc.—They pierce the chest until the lung is reached for chest complaints, and they even sometimes cut a small piece out of the lung through the aperture. They have medicine for wounds and for arrow poison, also for ulcers and for purging, but not for diarrhœa. They also have medicine to avert a threatened miscarriage. They profess to have a certain antidote for snake poison.[1] Venereal disease is practically unknown among the Ja-Luo.

Before going to war they often eat the outer seed case of a certain tree, and this is supposed to ensure their return unwounded; it is called *Ochola*.

Peace ceremonies.—They kill a sheep and put part of it into a wooden mortar used for crushing grain, and the representative of each side takes out a piece and gives it to the opposite side. An old man from the side that is beaten will go to the village of the chief of the enemy and proceed to sweep up the cattle boma; this will be accepted as a sign of submission.

Killing animals for food.—They kill oxen by sticking a knife into the jugular vein; the head of the beast must be pointed to the west during the operation. Sheep and goats are killed the same way. Fowls are strangled.

Succession customs, etc.—When a man dies the property goes to the brother if the children are small; if the eldest son is grown up he takes the property and gives his brothers a share; but a son is not allowed to take the amount paid by anyone who marries one of his sisters; this amount all goes to the father's brother. The brother of the deceased takes the wives, but the eldest son will probably take the youngest wife of his deceased father.

[1] After considerable difficulty I obtained specimens of the plants said to be used as antidotes for snake poison, and Dr. Rendle, of the Botanical Department, British Museum, has kindly identified the plants for me. One plant, named *Phytolacca Abyssinica*, is used internally, an infusion being made from the leaves. The other plant, *Ipomœa palmata*, is used externally, a plaster of the macerated leaves being placed on the wound. I have not been able to discover the physiological action of these plants.

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In the Eastern corner was a small length of inner wall covered with dry grass, from which a shrub was growing so as to leave a covered but hollow space between the walls."

795 778 231 The altar-post mentioned in the report and which is now in the Museum, is a piece of wood standing some 3½ to 4 feet high and about 5 or 6 inches in diameter. One end has been carved with the result that it appears to be an unmistakeable phallus. That this is intentional, however, has been strongly denied by all those questioned about it, and, from the manner of my informants, I am inclined to believe that what they say is true—as far as it goes, and for the following reasons. In every Luo boma the cattle are tied up at night to wooden posts embedded in the ground. Each beast as a rule has a post—called in Dholuo, "Loch,"—to itself. Where the owner of [531] the boma has an exceptionally fine bullock he marks it out for distinction by putting a metal bell—not unlike a Swiss cattle-bell—round it's neck and further he carves it an especially ornamental Loch. This carving is almost invariably phallic in shape, and I expect that the idol in the Museum was probably a loch uprooted from a nearby boma.

795 778 The point which was stressed to me was that although nearly all carved Loches appear to be undeniably phallic, yet this is entirely accidental and has no intended sexual symbolism or meaning whatsoever. It was just the custom to carve them thus.

174 831 Now I am prepared to believe that the phallic appearance of these Loches is produced unconsciously and without sexual significance, but, considering the geographical origin of the Luo and further the nature of the Mumbo beliefs, I consider that it is more than probable that the Loches in their present-day domestic capacity are the unconscious relics of phallic cults and practices handed down from unremembered antiquity, and have by now lost all their former phallic meaning. That they have been seized on as symbols in this religion is not surprising when one considers firstly their probable origin, which I have just indicated, and secondly the fact that the gospel of Mumboism in its promises of plenty without having to work for it (the phallus always having been the symbol of Fertility and Plenty) is typical of all phallic religions. If their choice of a phallus for a symbol is not an unconscious re-emergence of long forgotten rites, then it is an extremely interesting instinctive gesture that their choice of emblem should coincide with that of other and unconnected races who held parallel beliefs.

795 174 It would seem then that Mumboism is a mixture of the old Luo religion of sun worship, and of an even older religion, long forgotten in the mists of Time and now reappearing in a new guise.

795 797 The prophesies of Mumbo having failed, the cult is dying out, especially in Central Kavirondo, though it appears to be rather more tenacious in South Kavirondo. Further, active discouragement by the Government and the work of the Missions will soon banish it

241 Besides weeding, there is much to be done to protect the crop.
[789] Hail storms do a lot of damage at times, and to protect the crops a " medicine " is employed called ' migalo magalo pe." This consists of herbs tied in a bunch to the top of a pole about 6—8 feet high, which is stuck in the middle of the field. (Herdsmen too, use this
[231] to keep themselves dry while out with the cattle, and I have seen a herdsman accompanying the cows with these herbs tied to the top
[674] of his spear.) Except in time of famine, stealing from the crop is unknown, which contrasts favourably with complaints made from time to time that Natives steal maize and coffee from European farms. In their own community such an offence is practically unknown. But
241 four-legged depredators are a serious problem in certain localities.
417 Fields are enclosed in fences of the branches of thorn trees, laid on
136 the ground, and these do give a certain protection against wild pigs, monkeys and baboons. But they are of no use against hippo and elephant. To protect crops, mainly sweet potato, against the hippo it is the practice to erect a small temporary hut, which is occupied at night by a guard armed with a couple of spears. It must be a weary business, for the potatoes are cultivated close to the lake edge where mosquitoes swarm, so between the hippo and the mosquitoes the guard
[224] must have a trying time. In old days before the Game laws came in, organized hunts were held, which were very successful.

241 The most difficult animal is, of course, the elephant. These have
136 disappeared from Central Kavirondo but still infest districts like Mirunda and Sakwa in South Kavirondo. They can do heavy damage both to millet and sweet potato. The beating of pots and pans is tried to scare away the elephant, while occasionally the more daring venture forth from the hut to throw stones or otherwise drive away the beasts. This is an operation attended with peril in the dark of the night, and occasionally lives are lost in this way. Lives too are lost through guards mistaking their fellow guards for wild animals. Jok, one of the most famous of ancestors of the Luo, is said to have lost his life in this way. The story is that before going off to drink beer, he told his sons to go on guard in the field that night. They refused to his face, but when he had gone thought better of it, and went on guard. He returned from the beer drink, and went to see what was happening in the field, believing that there was no guard. His sons mistook his footsteps for that of a pig, and speared him with fatal results. Similar things still occur from time to time.

241 Birds, especially weaver birds, are a pest as the grain crop
136 ripens. Scarecrows are employed, both mechanical and human. Of the former an inverted cooking pot on the top of a short pole is a
857 common device. Boys are employed in large numbers when the birds are most troublesome, and their harsh cries are quite a part of the

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Industries.

241 **Agricultural pursuits.** Agriculture is the principal pursuit of the people and they have now become dependant upon their crops for the grain which forms their chief food. Millet and maize are grown freely and are ground into flour for making porridge. Men and women work together in the fields and dig them for the seed. They use the common hoe with a long handle when digging, and roughly hoe the ground, when rains are expected. Sweet potatoes, beans and sesame are grown more for change of diet and as additions, such as we should call savouries, to the porridge than as necessaries of life. When [302] the crops are a few inches high, the chief and all his people shave their heads, and from that time till harvest no one is allowed to shave again. After harvest the headman shaves and all the people follow his example. Should any one neglect this custom and shave before the time, it is said to be injurious [687] to the crops and to prevent the grain from ripening. The culprit is therefore fined for his heedless conduct. When the corn is in the ear, a goat is killed and the contents of the stomach are scattered about the field to prevent blight and to preserve the crops from being injured by hail-storms.

231 **Cow-keeping.** Cows form the principal wealth of the 234 people. The numbers vary in a village according to the pros- perity and success of the community. Milk is used as an article [262] of food, especially when sour and clotted, but it is more of a luxury, in the present progressive stage of the tribe, than a necessity; and the meat of the animals is almost entirely reserved for ceremonial use. Cattle are herded by boys and young men, who mix their herds and flocks of goats and sheep. [462] Women and girls are strictly forbidden to herd or to milk cows; they may churn and wash the milk-vessels, but there their duties in connection with cows end. Each village has its cattle, and the young men and boys of the place are responsible for their safety during the day, while they graze on the hill-side. 234 When a cow calves, the calf is left with the dam during the first ten days and the cow is not milked. On the morning of the eleventh day the cow is milked and the milk is churned, the

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butter being used for cooking a special meal which is eaten by the owner of the cow and his wife; a little of the butter is set aside and they smear it on their lips, but none of it may be smeared on their bodies. After the meal has been eaten, the cow is milked regularly and the milk may now be drunk by all the family.

Oxen used for riding. Oxen are frequently used for riding. The young men train the animals to this and ride them constantly. They turn them as they wish by prodding the side of the animal's cheek with a stick from which it turns away. The animals are trained, however, to obey the voice rather than wait for the stick. They trot along at a fast rate and cover the ground quicker than a man can walk.

Sheep and goats. Sheep and goats are kept by all villagers. Goats especially are eaten by men and women without any restrictions. Fowls are also kept, though, as is usual among most African tribes, fowls have to find their own food, and their chickens are constantly preyed upon by hawks and kites, and those that grow up are of a poor and miserable kind.

Building.

Architecture and mode of building. The houses are round huts with conical thatched roofs They have an outer wall of stakes three and sometimes four feet high with mud smeared over them on the inside and a central pole passing through the roof, to which the rafters are attached. The roof is thatched with grass and the end of the central pole, which passes through the roof, is rudely carved. The houses are grouped together, leaving room enough to pass between them, and a growing fence surrounds them. Many villages have no outer fence, but are built high up the hill-sides for protection from hostile clans.

Religion.

Religious beliefs. Apart from worship of the dead and a belief in ghosts, the people have little religion. They call the supreme being Nyasi, who, they say, is to be found in large trees. In times of trouble or sickness they make offerings to him of an animal which is killed under a large tree, and the

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LUO CUSTOMS WITH REGARD TO ANIMALS (WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO CATTLE).

By Walter Odede,*

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The Significance of Stock to the Luo.

231 521 The Luo are both pastoral and agricultural people, and so any discussion involving a group of young and old men with regard to the relative importance of animals and crops usually results in an endless debate. As a rule the view is unanimously held by the elders that animals are more important to them than crops; but the young men will often support crops, because since the advent of Europeans to the country the Government has introduced cash crops which are easily grown and marketed to obtain such articles as clothes, soap, lamps, etc. The elders on the other hand support their argument by saying that during a very bad famine poor people die unless they become the servants of cattle-owners who live comparatively normally during hard times. They urge that children brought up in homes where there is plenty of milk grow up finer and more handsome [753] than those in homes where there is only grain. Again those who stress the importance of animals, go so far as to say that [511] women in poor homes develop scaly backs. Poor homes for the Luo are homes where, no matter how much grain is stored, there are no cattle, and women usually run away from such homes. Strictly speaking, the word "rich," when used by a typical Jaluo, signifies a man with a large number of stock.

231 The chief animals owned by the Luo are cattle, goats, sheep and poultry. In discussing the importance and uses of these animals to the people of this tribe it would probably be better to take each of them separately.

262 Cattle produce milk which is a valuable and nourishing food and which has other important uses besides being drunk as such. From it the Luo make butter which is used by women and old men for anointing their bodies. Besides this, butter can be turned into ghee which is the favourite animal product used in cooking. Fresh or whole milk is not drunk by the Luo [272] unless it is mixed with a little sourmilk or buttermilk which [753] has been treated with cow urine. The reason why the milk is not drunk pure is because it is believed that this practice is the cause of human tapeworm infestation. Women and girls who have passed the age of puberty do not drink milk. Stored

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buttermilk is used for making gruel which can be consumed by both sexes. Both buttermilk and fresh milk are used for cooking vegetables and fresh bovine blood for human consumption. The Luo do not slaughter their cattle for beef except for some special reason, for example, on the occasion of a special feast. The ordinary meat eaten is that of animals which have died as a result of disease or accident. If there is an outbreak of a serious disease and many animals die, their meat is made into biltong which can be stored for future consumption. Such biltong forms a very palatable diet when properly cooked with ghee. Girls do not eat the meat of cattle paid for their dowries.

Hides are used as sleeping mats, and for making shields, drums, sandals and special head-dresses on which ostrich feathers are fixed. Those of very young animals are used as clothes.

Cattle can be exchanged for millet or maize at any time, i.e., during famine or in good years; but cattle-owners tend to refuse millet or maize for their cattle after good harvests. This is one of the facts which support the argument of the Luo elders who prefer animals to crops. In exchanging cattle for goats and sheep, a bull is worth three to four goats and a heifer, six to eight goats or sheep. A goat or sheep is worth six to eight fowls.

The young men use young oxen for riding, and they sell heifers to buy buffalo hides for making shields or ostrich feathers for their adornment at funeral dances. Cattle accompany the mourners when attending funerals and, during inter-tribal wars, oxen were the companions of warriors on the battlefield. The horns make valuable trumpets and are used as containers for keeping powdered drugs. Tendons make strong strings for harps and bows. Cattle dung is useful for smearing houses and dry dung is good for the fire. Fresh blood as mentioned above makes a palatable food when mixed with milk and cooked. The scapula of small animals is used as a butter-scoop and for other domestic purposes. Hoofs are used for storing drugs and for running liquid medicines into the noses of both human and animal patients, e.g., an infusion of a plant known in Luo as *jonderusi** is given in this way to cattle suffering from east coast fever. The long hair of the tail is used for trapping birds. The scrotum forms a valuable pocket.

Goats' milk is the food of the herd-boys when looking after animals in the pastures. They add the juice of a fruit† to the fresh milk and after a few minutes the milk coagulates and is ready for consumption. Goat skins are worn by both men and women and goat's meat is eaten by both sexes. The goat is the animal usually slaughtered for female visitors such as mothers and sisters-in-law. The chief produce from sheep is mutton

*Dolichos sp. probably *D. Meiklejohnii*.
†Solanum sp. probably *S. incanum*, Sodom apple.—Editor.

which is only eaten by men and young girls. Women despise sheep saying that they are the most foolish of animals and remark that their meat has a horrible odour. Poultry are placed by women in the same category as sheep because they eat dirty things, e.g., excreta and some ugly insects. 231 242

There are certain parts of a cow which are usually only eaten by special groups of people, e.g., the kidney and the abomasum are reserved for girls, the brisket and the abdominal muscles which originate from it for young men, the tongue and the hump for old men, and the diaphragm for those who take fresh blood from cattle for human consumption.

Cattle and goats are the chief animals used for the payment of dowries. Sheep are seldom used for this purpose because every girl believes that if a sheep is paid for her dowry it means that she is despised by her sweetheart. Sometimes this is enough to break off the marriage. The number of cattle paid for a dowry is usually between fourteen and twenty-four. More cattle are paid for the daughters of rich people and chiefs because these girls will, during their wedded life, take much property to their husbands: property collected during the frequent visits they pay to their fathers. 231 583 [554] [431]

In the course of paying a dowry, discussions go on between the father, uncle, full and step-brothers of the girl as to who will receive some of the special animals paid for her dowry. The same applies in the case of the payment of the dowry by the man, for although the father is responsible for paying most of the cattle, he is helped by some of his uncles and brothers. 583

The first eight to twelve cattle paid, three to five of which are females, are taken by the full brothers of the girl. Sometime after this payment has been made the girl is caught in the morning by relations of her sweetheart who take her to him. From this day the girl is known as *miaha* (the bride) and the husband as *wuon kisera* (the bridegroom). In the afternoon of the day on which she is caught, her sisters follow her and stay with her at the bridegroom's home for a night, after which they return to their own home early in the morning. The bride is left with one of her girl-cousins who stays with her until she is brought back to her home so that payment of special cattle for her different relations may commence. The first eight to twelve cattle which were paid before she met her husband are not special cattle because they can be inherited by any of her full brothers. Sometimes in the morning of the first night that the bride stays with the bridegroom, her sisters-in-law (the wives of her brothers) go to the bridegroom's kraal and choose a bull. This bull is inherited by the bride's eldest brother. About two weeks after the bride and her cousin have been at the bridegroom's home, her father slaughters an ox and the meat is taken to the bridegroom's house, some cooked 583 585

231 Old cows which have stopped producing are usually killed
[837] and their meat exchanged for millet or maize which in turn
is bartered for new young heifers, bulls, goats or sheep, or if
764 necessary used for consumption. The same applies to oxen
although these are usually exchanged directly for other stock.
A heifer is usually worth two bulls or young oxen. The special
oxen used by their owners as companions when they attend
funeral mournings are seldom exchanged, but are slaughtered
when they get old, the owners preparing special feasts as a
tribute to their past service. A young man who has ridden a
special ox at funeral dances does not eat the meat when the
ox dies as a result of disease or accident. These "companions"
are usually honoured by having bells fixed on special leather
straps fastened around their necks. Some he-goats are also so
honoured. The ringing of these bells will sometimes stop
hyenas from entering the kraal and may help in tracing animals
when grazing in bushy country. The ears of the owners are
usually sensitive to the sound of the bells of their own oxen.

231 The Luo do not like polled cattle because some of them
believe that such animals are unlucky. They say that if a
[842] polled animal is paid as part of a dowry the woman is likely
to be sterile. They are very fond of oxen with long horns or
those with peculiarly or funnily placed horns. During drinking
parties the owners of such oxen "show off" by placing their
arms in different positions to demonstrate the directions of the
horns of their oxen. This performance is a sign of wealth
[556] because the average man does not possess a number of oxen
with abnormally-placed horns. Long-horned cows are not of
special value. The horns of dangerous animals are cut so as to
reduce the risk of people and young animals being horned.

Beautifying animals by branding which is practised by
some African tribes is not favoured by the Luo. The only
method that is used to increase the natural beauty of cattle,
especially bull calves, is to trim the ears. Trimming is, however,
[232] also done as a treatment for east coast fever because in this
disease the animal appears dull and heavy as if suffering from
headache, and the Luo believe that by letting a little blood
from the ear the headache is eased.

231 Luo cattle-owners do not usually go in for special colours,
but there are some colours which are considered objectionable.
822 Pure white is not liked because white animals are usually
susceptible to skin diseases, accidental skin lesions and to
marking by tick-bites which usually remain permanently
conspicuous. Another objectionable colour is striped, dark,
dull-brown. Animals with these mixed colours are not accepted
for dowry because the disagreeable colours may cause disagree-
ment during the arrangement of the marriage or between the
wife and her husband. Brown is unanimously favoured because
it is considered resistant to skin diseases and accidental injuries.

Black and white or red and white are favoured in oxen used as companions during funeral dances and other ceremonies.

TREATMENT OF ANIMALS.

Although the Luo are ignorant of the use of specific drugs for the treatment of different animal diseases, yet, when an animal is suffering they make keen attempts to cure it. As a result of such trials, cures have been reported in east coast fever, anthrax, blackquarter, mange, etc. Sometimes the treatment of one disease is so complicated that it is impossible to tell what agent may have been effective. It is clear that in some diseases animals may recover after empirical treatment. In the case of east coast fever, the treatment consists of cutting the ear, cauterising the glands and pouring into the nose a liquid infusion of a plant known in Luo as *jandarusi*.* This drug causes a great deal of sneezing and is, therefore, said to free the blocked-up and congested sinuses. It is generally believed that many animals are saved by the use of this drug.

The Luo believe that they cure blackquarter by bleeding and by cauterising the affected quarter or even the whole body. Nowadays, some people who can procure potassium permanganate make large incisions of the affected part and rub in crystals or a saturated solution of the drug. Mange in goats and dogs is cured by washing the animals with tobacco infusion and the urine of cattle which has been stored for a few days. There are several drugs which are believed to be quite effective in expelling retained foetal membranes.

It is quite certain that the Luo have no method of immunising animals against diseases.

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*See footnote to page 128.

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blocks on the upper part of the arm. The wooden blocks are coloured red with oxide of iron. A band strung with small pieces of wood of the same colour is sometimes worn round the forehead. Some of the married men wear a semi-circle of ivory on the forehead, made of the split canine teeth of the hippopotamus. (The tooth, however, I am informed, is not split, but ground down until it is only an eighth of an inch thick.) Others wear the tusks of a wart-hog. The Ja-luo men, like most of the tribes of Nilotic origin, frequently adopt a curious stork-like attitude, standing on some hillock or ant-hill on one leg with the other leg bent and the sole of the foot apposed to the inner side of the knee of the leg on which the body is poised. They usually wear sandals of leather when travelling.

The Ja-luo live much by *agriculture*. They cultivate *sorghum, sweet potatoes, peas, beans, eleusine, pumpkins, tobacco, and hemp*. Salt is made from the ashes of reeds. They eat practically *all kinds of meat* except the hyæna. Young men eat leopard in order to make them fierce in war. The crested crane is universally protected, and is never killed. The women do not eat fowls, and some women do not eat sheep or eggs. Some eat hippopotamus, and some refuse that meat. Women do not drink milk, but eat it cooked with food. They have a disagreeable custom of mixing cows' urine with the milk of the cow. The urine is allowed to stand a day or two in order to increase its flavour. The people say that this admixture increases the amount of butter in the milk. They like the flavour, and think that it has medicinal value. They kill oxen by sticking a knife into the jugular vein. The head must be pointed to the west during the operation. Sheep and goats are killed in the same manner. Besides the flesh of fowls, cattle, sheep, and goats, they eat large quantities of fish, which they obtain from the rivers, and, above all, from the waters of the Victoria Nyanza.

Cooking is done entirely by women in earthen pots inside the hut or on the verandah, and the food is served in little wicker baskets. Father and sons eat together in a little separate hut which has open sides. Women eat separately from the men inside their own houses.

They do not *hunt* much with dogs, but catch a good deal of game in pitfalls. They will also attack the elephant with spears. Fish is caught in the Victoria Nyanza by means of large, conical wicker traps called "dema." The process is as follows: They bring two very long ropes, one end of each of which is firmly secured to the shore. One rope lies, weighted, along the bottom under the water, the other floats on the surface, but from it hangs a fringe of papyrus stalks. The two ropes above and below correspond with its other, and are connected at intervals with strings to ensure their correspondence, while the fringe of papyrus

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765 a dead person shave their heads for three days after the death. The eldest son of the deceased sits on a stool outside the village, and has his head shaved. If any one of importance dies, the neighbours do not
766 cultivate for three days after the death. If a big chief dies, all the surrounding people collect at the village, and in such cases even hostilities between clans are suspended, and all join in the funeral rites of the late chief, even if he happens to be at war with some of his dependent clans. In the case of the death of a chief, a new hut is built. The grave of the chief is dug by his brother. A new ox hide is placed at the bottom of the grave, and the head of the corpse is covered with a water-pot. Seeds of every kind of grain grown in the vicinity are put into the grave, but sweet potatoes are excluded. The people dance and drink "tembo" for ten days, and slaughter many oxen. The men wail for ten days, but the women wail every morning for a year. No one cultivates the fields for ten days.

428 When a man dies, his *property* goes to the brother, if the children are small. If the eldest son is grown up, he takes the property and gives his brothers a share, but a man is not allowed to take the amount paid by any one who marries one of his sisters. This marriage payment goes to
[587] the deceased father's brothers. The brothers of the deceased take his wives,
[622] but the eldest son probably takes the youngest wife of his deceased father. When a chief dies, the son whom he has chosen succeeds him. This successor is chosen really some years before the chief dies. The successor divides the private property of the chief with his brothers.

727 When a warrior *has killed a man in warfare*, he must (besides
782 shaving his head) catch a fowl and hang it round his neck head uppermost. He must not enter his home village until this has been done. Whilst the fowl is suspended to the man's neck by the beak its head is severed from the body, and the head is left hanging from the man's neck. The warrior then enters the village, and shortly afterwards prepares a big feast to propitiate the man he has killed, so that his ghost may not give
788 trouble. If a house is struck by *lightning*, and any one is killed inside, the head-man of the village must obtain a male fowl of a red colour and walk round the house holding up the fowl three times. The house is then broken up, and the wood is used for other purposes. When desiring
728 *to make peace* with another tribe with whom they have been at war, they kill a sheep and put part of it into a wooden mortar such as is used for crushing grain. The representatives of each side then take out pieces of the flesh and exchange them reciprocally. An old man belonging to the side which has been worsted, and which is suing for peace, must
[231] then go to the head village of the conqueror and proceed to sweep up the cattle kraal. This is accepted as a kind of submission.

145 Like the Bantu Kavirondo, the Ja-luo are in the main *a healthy people*.

16: Northcote G-5 (no date) 1907 FL11 Luo FL11

storm of rain broke over the valley, and next morning the complainants were back again to point out that his refusal to come in at the Bwana's summons had so frightened the rain-maker that he had sent rain next day, and to offer most hearty thanks for the white man's beneficent interference.

Though the Jaluo have good manners on the whole, some of their customs are decidedly the reverse of civilised. In common with the other Nilotic tribes of British East Africa, they draw blood from the living cattle and drink it. The custom, however, has its justification, for in many parts of Kavirondo this is the only method by which the natives can obtain salt. Also the older men are confirmed drunkards and hemp smokers, which causes them to age very quickly and probably shortens the average term of life.

Those who dwell on the shores of the great lake and of the larger rivers are expert fishermen: they catch fish with rod and line, a sunken trawl line, in weirs, by woven grass substitutes for nets, and by spearing them with four-pronged wooden spears which they throw with extraordinary accuracy. They are also keen huntsmen, though of little use out shooting, and possess highly trained dogs which will run down an oribi or hare or find a wounded guinea fowl knocked down by their throwing sticks.

In character they are naturally very honest, except with regard to cattle, a temptation which no East African can withstand. They are extremely jealous of any relations between their women and men of other tribes, nations or colour; but among themselves an unmarried woman who has reached the age of puberty may have as many friends, as they call them, as she likes, provided that they come from another clan; after marriage she must confine her attentions to her husband.

Perhaps their most pleasant trait is their love of fun and laughter: the feeblest joke or the slightest bit of horse-play will set them in roars of laughter. For hospitality and industry they have a well-earned name; they are, in fact, in every way most amenable when treated with a little kindness and consideration. They have a considerable knowledge of blacksmith's work, though the spears which they turn out cannot be compared with those of the Masai for fine work. With the latter tribe, however, they show a well-developed artistic sense, the designs on their shields being generally handsome and well carried out. They are also very fond of music—of a kind: they play upon an eight-stringed harp, which is mainly used to provide an accompaniment to their extempore songs, composed in the heroic or comic vein.

Speaking generally and comparatively they are a peaceful, non-aggressive folk, though the common impression that they are cowards is ridiculously wrong: in the writer's small experience of African tribes they have shown themselves better fighters than the much-lauded Swahili, and better policemen than the dreaded Masai; they are certainly more amenable to discipline and less inclined to prefer their own wisdom to that of their officers.

On the other hand they are most painfully litigious: civil cases which arose in

17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Luo FL11

is a most important grouping intermediate between the compound family and its individual members. It is a semi-autonomous domestic unit with its own kitchen economy, its own property rights in cattle, goats, sheep, chickens, land, tools, granaries, and food stocks. Correspondingly it is responsible for its own building and repairs, fuel and water collecting, food provision and allocation from harvest to harvest, and has its own ritual rights and obligations. But the husband is an element common to them all and, having his own rights and duties in respect of these matters, binds them closely together. Livestock are herded co-operatively, not only for all the elementary families of a homestead, but for several homesteads together. The husband is the titular head of a corporate group, not an absolute rightholder.[1] He allocates land, cattle, and other property accruing to the compound family group among its elementary families, and this allocation limits the proportion in which it will eventually be inherited by the sons in each elementary family. He is also able to make levies of property for special purposes from all his elementary families. But in all situations involving social groups wider than the homestead, its head is subject to the decisions of the leader-in-council of the lineage segment to which he belongs. The exclusiveness of elementary families is potentially high, but in practice depends on the skill of the homestead head in securing and maintaining harmony, and on the natural compatibility or otherwise of co-wives. When these factors favour, co-wives may be seen co-operating in many tasks, taking it in turns to supply the husband—or one another's children—with food, combining as a team for garden work, or sharing one another's water-supply. But it cannot be denied that the Luo regard friction between co-wives as being a more normal state of affairs. Behind these situational variations lies the invariable right of the husband to regular cooked food from each wife, of each wife to regular sexual attention from the husband, and the general responsibility of each elementary family for its own self-maintenance granted its rightful assistance from the husband in his proper part of each task.

The rearing of children is woven into this framework. The baby's first contacts are naturally with its mother, who may not finally wean it till it is about two years old, unless as a result of a subsequent pregnancy she has to do so sooner; for suckling a child with a younger sibling in the womb is regarded as robbing and endangering the latter. The baby sleeps in its mother's hut at night and sleeps and later plays near it during the day. It is most closely associated with the other members of its own elementary family, especially the female ones circling round the hearth for the preparation and cooking of food. Other members of the compound family will be hardly less well known from their presence together inside the homestead hedge, but all non-members of the homestead will be comparative strangers except very close relatives or near neighbours who are constant visitors within it.

Babies of either sex are soon each put in the charge of one of the older unmarried girls, probably a real or classificatory sister. This brings them in contact with the world outside the homestead, where a number of these nurse-girls (Dholuo *jopidi*) meet regularly in informal play groups. By the time children can run about on their own they too form play groups, including both girls and boys from several homesteads. Gradually the interests of the two sexes diverge, the boys going off with

[1] The Luo homestead in all phases of its life-cycle would sustain the definition of a corporate group in Weber's sense. See *Theory of Political and Economic Organization*, p. 133.